

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1239

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2968

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS JO XF

SUBJ: PERES ON GUSH EMUNIM AND WEST BANK

1. DEFMIN PERES, AT APRIL 26 MEETING WITH NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE GROUP, ANSWERED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RECENT GUSH EMUNIM MARCH THROUGH THE WEST BANK, ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK AND THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE.

2. ASKED WHY THE GUSH EMUNIM MARCH WAS ALLOWED, PERES STATED WITH BARELY SUPPRESSED ANGER THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO HARM IN THE MARCH, THAT IT HAD BEEN PEACEFUL, AND THAT IN ISRAEL, THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC STATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS ARE THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT GOING TO STOP SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS JUST BECAUSE THOSE INVOLVED WERE JEWISH. "AFTER ALL, WE PERMIT CHRISTIANS TO MARCH--I APPROVED A PETITION FOR A MARCH THE OTHER DAY BY CHRISTIAN GROUP WHICH WAS SIGNED BY ONE IDENTIFYING HIMSELF AS THE CUSTODIAN OF THE HOLY LAND. NO ONE COMPLAINS ABOUT THAT".

3. PRESSED ON POINT THAT THE MARCH WAS HELD ON OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND MIGHT THEREFORE BE CONSIDERED ILLEGAL, PERES STATED

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TESTILY THAT IN 1967 ISRAEL HAD INDICATED SHE HAD NO

INTENTION OF ATTACKING JORDAN AND HAD REPEATEDLY SENT HUSSEIN MESSAGES TO THAT EFFECT. JORDAN NEVERTHELESS ATTACKED ISRAEL AND THE RESULTS ARE PLAIN. HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT JORDAN HAD NO REAL CLAIM TO THE WEST BANK AND THAT ONLY TWO COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD HAD EVER RECOGNIZED JORDANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE AREA. THE WEAKNESS OF JORDAN'S CLAIM HAD BEEN FURTHER DEMONSTRATED AT RABAT.

4. CONCERNING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK, PERES SAID THAT THE SETTLEMENTS WERE THERE, THAT THEY HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED WHERE THERE WERE NO ARABS AND DID NOT DISPLACE ANYONE. HRE HE RECOUNTED THAT THER HAD BEEN A JEWISH SETTLEMENT NEAR HEBRON UNTIL 1929, AT WHICH TIME ALL THE INHABITANTS HAD BEEN KILLED BY ARABS. "AM I TO TELL THE DESCENDENTS OF THOSE WHO WERE KILLED THAT THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO RETURN AND SETTLE?"

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE, PERES STRESSED THAT ISRAEL COULD NVER ACCEPT A HOSTILE STATE WITH BOUNDARIES WHICH WOULD LEAVE TWO-THIRDS OF THE ISRAELI POPULATION (HAIFA TO ASHDOD) LIVING IN AN AREA ONLY EIGHT MILES WIDE, WITH THE SEA ON THE OTHER SIDE. "WE WILL NEVER COMMIT SUICIDE" BY AGREEING TO SUCH A SITUATION. COMMENT: THIS WAS PERES SHOWING HIS CREDENTIALS AS A HAWK--AND AN UNCHARACTERICALLY TESTY ONE.
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